

# REAL REFORM

*Enacted three years ago, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act has ended the political parties' addiction to special interest "soft money" and helped to reenergize grassroots politics. Here are facts:*

## **The Rebirth of Grassroots Politics: Smaller Contributions and Broader Participation**

- According to the Campaign Finance Institute, the total value of donations under \$200 made to Presidential candidates increased under BCRA from \$54 million during the 2000 campaign, to \$205 million in 2004.
- Under BCRA, Republicans and Democrats have increased their donor rolls. In 2004, Democrats increased their number of contributors to 2.7 million. In the same year, Republicans saw a net increase of 1.8 million new donors.
- Opponents of BCRA also said the law would stifle the national political parties' ability to fundraise. The national parties raised a record \$1.2 billion together -- entirely in hard money -- ***\$140 million more than they raised in hard and soft money combined in 2000.***
- Opponents said BCRA would slash the amount of money raised. But both sides raised more money in the post-BCRA election. President Bush raised \$260 million for his primary, tripling his take in 2000. Senator John Kerry raised \$248 million for his primary, almost five times as much as Al Gore. Congressional candidates raised record amounts for the 2004 elections.
- "We have much stronger parties today under McCain-Feingold," according to Anthony Corrado, a campaign-finance expert at Colby College and fellow at the Brookings Institution. "They both have much broader donor rolls, bigger lists and organizational structures and thus played a bigger role in candidate support."
- "[A]s one who has been skeptical of the claimed virtues of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law, I am happy to concede that it has, in fact, passed its first test in the 2004 campaign with flying colors," David Broder wrote in a February 3, 2005 column in the Washington Post. "[a] solid start has been made in expanding the financial base of both parties and using the resources to bring more people into the electorate. That is all to the good," Broder further wrote.
- Corporate contributions fund campaign activities have slowed to nearly nothing. Though unregulated soft money flowed to so-called 527 groups, it did not come from corporate sources. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that "Of the top 10 corporate political donors in 2000, which contributed more than \$21 million to both parties, not one is giving to the 527s." According to the *Journal*, "The collapse of corporate funding marks a major shift in the history of political finance."